

Compare roles in health

Not sure where to start with the hundreds of NHS careers? Use our compare roles section to get bite-size information on the entry requirements and training, pay and conditions, prospects and skills needed of up to three roles. If there is something that you think you could do, then get more in-depth information on the role.

Don't forget, you can also save your role comparisons by registering with us.

- **General practitioner** ^[1]

General practitioners (GPs) treat all common medical conditions and refer patients to hospitals and other medical services for urgent and specialist treatment.

Training and qualifications required

Training usually starts with a five year first degree in medicine. You'll then complete two years of foundation training and three years of specialty training. The length of training can vary according to your circumstances.

Expected working hours and salary range

NHS salaried GPs earn at least £60,000 a year. GPs who run their own practices will usually earn more. Doctors may work up to 48 hours a week. The working hours may sometimes extend beyond the normal working day to include early mornings, evenings and weekends.

Desirable skills and values

You'll need excellent clinical skills and be able to diagnose and manage multiple diseases and problems whilst dealing with the uncertainty of clinical presentations. You'll manage time and people well, have highly developed communication and change management skills and work well in a team. It's important that you can assess risk and take initiative in highly pressurised and emotive situations.

Prospects

You could specialise in areas such as sports medicine, adolescent health, diabetes or palliative medicine, get involved in research or teach medical students or postgraduate doctors in training.

Related roles

- General practice nurse ^[2]
- Practice manager ^[3]

- [Pharmacist](#) ^[4]
- [General psychiatry](#) ^[5]

• **Infection sciences** ^[6]

Infection science focuses on such areas as clinical microbiology, immunology, parasitology and virology.

Training and qualifications required

There are two entry points - with A-levels in at least two subjects (including science) or equivalent level-3 qualifications to apply for an accredited BSc degree in healthcare science (infection sciences) to enter the NHS Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) or through the NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) for which you'll need a 1st or 2.1 either in an undergraduate honours degree or an integrated master's degree in a relevant pure or applied science subject. If you have a relevant 2.2 honours degree, you'll also be considered if you have a higher degree in a subject relevant to the specialism for which you are applying. Evidence of research experience is desirable

Expected working hours and salary range

NHS staff will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. They may work a shift pattern. Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. If you work in infection sciences, you will typically be in a post between AfC bands 5 and 9, depending on the precise role and level of responsibility. As a healthcare science practitioner, you'd usually start on band 5, with opportunities to progress to more senior positions. Trainee clinical scientists train at band 6 level, and qualified clinical scientists are generally appointed at band 7. With experience and further qualifications, you could apply for posts up to band 9. Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

An interest in science and technology, good communication skills, comfortable using modern technology and complex equipment, attention to detail, good interpersonal skills and able to work as part of a team.

Prospects

With further training or experience or both, you may be able to develop your career further and apply for vacancies in areas such as further specialisation, management, research, or teaching.

Related roles

- [Biomedical science](#) ^[7]
- [Blood sciences](#) ^[8]
- [Cellular sciences](#) ^[9]
- [Experienced paramedic](#) ^[10]

• **Dental nurse** ^[11]

A dental nurse supports the dentist in all aspects of patients' dental care.

Training and qualifications required

To work as a dental nurse, you have to be registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) or be enrolled on a GDC-approved certificate, diploma or degree course. You do not necessarily need academic qualifications to work as a trainee dental nurse but you will need to study for qualifications to progress.

Expected working hours and salary range

Most dental nurses in the NHS work standard hours, which are likely to be around 37.5 a week. They may work some evenings. Your starting salary will usually be between band 3 and band 4 of the Agenda for Change pay rates but some senior dental nurses will start at band 5 or higher. Terms and conditions may vary for those dental nurses not directly employed by the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

Being a dental nurse requires a friendly, responsible attitude, a positive approach to people and a willingness to study. You must be happy to work as part of a team and willing to learn and understand the science behind dentistry.

Prospects

Experience as a dental nurse is usually a requirement for those wishing to become a dental hygienist or dental therapist. With experience and further training, dental nurses can also work as orthodontic therapists.

Related roles

- [Dental support worker](#) ^[12]
- [Receptionist](#) ^[13]
- [Dental therapist](#) ^[14]
- [Dental hygienist](#) ^[15]

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